The War Paper for Women

VOTES FOR WOMEN

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

VOL. IX. (Fourth Series) No. 425. MARCH, 1917. Price 1d. Monthly (Post Free 1½d.)

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DEDICATION

To the brave women who to-day are fighting for freedom: to the noble women who all down the ages kept the flag flying and looked forward to this day without seeing it: to all women all over the world, of whatever race, or creed, or calling, whether they be with us or against us in this fight, we dedicate this paper.

THE OUTLOOK

A new chapter has been opened in the suffrage movement by the publication of the Report of the Speaker's Conference on Electoral Reform, with which we deal in our leading article on page 244. As these words are written, it is impossible to prophesy with certainty what will be the outcome of the situation thus created. There are many rumours afloat, favourable and otherwise, of which the most sinister is to the effect that no Bill based upon the recommendations of the Conference will be forthcoming at all. This prediction is accompanied by another of a possible General Election on the old register. We remind all whom it may concern that in such an event the problem of franchise reform will still remain to be solved. Its evasion now does not mean the disposal of it. Nothing but a Franchise Bill can possibly create a register on which the true Parliament of Reconstruction could be elected by the people.

The Just Expectations of Suffragists

Most opportunely, the week after the issue of the Speaker's Report, the great adult suffrage demonstration was held in the Kingsway Hall, at which Sir John Simon made the principal speech. All the speeches, however, were excellent; and a brilliant audience, representing most phases of national life, gathered to hear them, many people being turned away at the doors for lack of accommodation. A fortnight later another great suffrage meeting was held in the Queen's Hall, presided over by Mrs. Fawcett, at which Mr. Runciman, M.P., Mrs. Creighton and others spoke. The United Suffragists supported both these demonstrations. An important joint-meeting of suffrage societies is being held in Manchester on March 3, at which the speakers will include Mrs. Despard, Sir John Simon, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, and Miss Margaret Ashton. No Government can afford to neglect, especially in war time when orderly and combined national action becomes of such high importance, these various manifestations of a desire for the settlement of the franchise question—a desire universally reflected in the Press. The next move is with the House of Commons, which is shortly to have an opportunity, through the medium of a resolution, of pronouncing its opinion upon the recommendations. All suffragists will expect the House to give a strong lead to the Government, so that a satisfactory Bill may be introduced into Parliament at the earliest possible moment.

A Lead from America

That lead has already been given by America, from which comes news of the greatest encouragement. Though possibly on the brink of war, and in any case deeply involved in the issues raised by the European conflict, the United States in two notable suffrage victories have just recorded their sense of the value of democracy at such a moment. Both North Dakota and Ohio have adopted woman suffrage, in the form that obtains in Illinois—that is, Presidential and municipal suffrage on a womanhood basis. (In addition to these three partially enfranchised States, twelve other States enjoy full womanhood and manhood suffrage.) Our warmest congratulations are due to the women of North Dakota and Ohio, whose victory should help to encourage our own Parliament to bring Great Britain into line with the more progressive United States without further delay. Our own Dominions, too, are not lagging behind. According to a Toronto message, it is considered highly probable that the Ontario Government will endorse a Woman Suffrage Bill to be submitted this session by a private member. Needless to say, we heartily wish this enterprise the success that has already attended the Woman Suffrage Bills of the Western Provinces of Canada.

Criminal Law Amendment Bill

A Bill of the gravest import to women is being discussed in Parliament as we go to press. On the next page will be found a reasoned criticism of its dangerous clauses by Miss Alison Neilans, well qualified to speak by reason of her position as secretary to the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene (founded under another name by Mrs. Josephine Butler). Like former measures of a similar kind, this new amendment of the Criminal Law combines with certain objectionable features, which amount to a reversion to some of the worst provisions of the C.D. Acts, a number of real reforms, such as the raising of the age of consent for indecent assault from thirteen to sixteen, and the abolition of the plea of reasonable supposition that the girl assaulted was under sixteen. The great objection to the Bill is that, although the word "person" is used, the victims of the penal clauses would be mainly prostitutes, with a sprinkling of male vagrants, and that convictions would rest almost solely on police evidence. Whatever might be felt about such measures in a country where enfranchised women exercise equal powers with men, they can only be opposed strenuously in this country where women are not citizens and there is a double moral standard for men and women.

The Mother and Infant Mortality

If the provisional vital statistics for 1916 prove to be correct, the infant mortality rate for that year was the lowest on record—ninety-one deaths per thousand births. In the *New Statesman* different correspondents have been trying to find a reason for this remarkable fact, and the upshot seems to be that, although the new State-aided machinery for infant welfare has something to do with it, another cause may well be sought in the healthier condition of the mothers, who are not only better fed owing to the absence of the husband and a full control of the separation allowance (added to the higher wages earned by the older children), but who also admit in many cases that they now have time to nurse their babies. It is dangerous to rush to conclusions in such a matter; but when we consider that against these alleged advantages of war time must be set the high price and scarcity of milk, Zeppelin raids and other causes of anxiety necessarily affecting the health both of mother and baby, which would not apply to peace time, we must concede that a very good case is made out for those who, like ourselves, have always urged that the amelioration of the conditions under which the poor, and especially the mothers, have to live would be the first step towards saving the lives of our babies. But what a scandal is revealed if a state of war can do for our mothers what years of peace failed utterly to achieve!

Working Women and Rationing

The food shortage has, therefore, a great bearing on the question of the mother's health. Lord Devonport's suggested rations are evidently designed to apply to well-fed households. They cannot be held to apply to the great mass of the people's homes, where the staple food is bread, and where, at present prices, it is impossible to attain to anything like the full ration of meat proposed, or to provide the many substitutes suggested. Bread has again gone up; milk threatens to become still more scarce. Babies, unfortunately, cannot thrive on the chestnut soup or the many vegetarian dishes advertised in the newspapers, nor can poor mothers afford either the time or the firing required to prepare these substitutes for the simpler forms of diet. We see that the new Minister of Education proposes to raise the school age to sixteen. We are heartily with him in his desire for education reforms. But does he realise that unless this particular one is accompanied with a maintenance grant it will mean food retrenchment for the whole family, and something like slow starvation for most working-class mothers?

Voteless Mothers and Pensions

We feel very strongly that the whole question of social reform for voteless mothers needs to be carefully approached by suffragists. The writer of "Under the Clock" in the *Daily News* (February 27) reprints the following "Warning to Mothers," issued by the Norwich Education Committee:—

> Notice is hereby given that in the event of women in receipt of separation allowance neglecting to enforce the attendance of their children at school, the Education Committee will be obliged to call the attention of the Government to the matter.

Well may the commentator ask if this is "another of the sinister and insidious endeavours of the War Office to assume the direction of the eating and drinking, the downsitting and uprising, of every woman in receipt of separation allowance"! And we heartily agree further that "there are more of these offensive attempts at surveillance on foot than is generally appreciated." State surveillance

of those in receipt of State pensions may or may not be right and necessary. That is not the point here. What is perfectly clear is that State supervision of those *who have no power to control the State* simply delivers these women into the power of the police, or whoever may be appointed to exercise that supervision. And we therefore condemn utterly this treatment of the voteless wives and mothers of our soldiers and sailors.

An Advance in Munition Wages

Mr. Kellaway, M.P., stated in the House the other day that in November there were 400,000 women in Government factories, of whom 373,000 came under the "orders" issued as to wages. The newest of these orders applies to women employed on skilled munition work, who in future will start at 25s. a week, receiving proportional advances until the thirteenth week, after which they will be paid at the men's rate of 10½d. per hour. This is a great advance on the former unsatisfactory state of things; although, until all the women are brought in under the orders, there will still be those other underpaid munition workers of whom Miss Macarthur spoke so forcibly in her speech, reproduced by us on page 245. We are deeply concerned to know whether in other kinds of Government work the principle of equal pay for equal work will soon be adopted. At a recent meeting of the Tailoring Trade Board (Great Britain) it was resolved to vary the minimum time rates of wages from 3½d. to 4d. an hour in the case of women, and from 6d. to 7d. an hour in the case of men. What is the reason for this differentiation between the sexes?

Medical Woman as Tax Resister

Dr. Patch made a courageous defence of her position, on the occasion of her public examination, on February 27, in the bankruptcy proceedings brought against her for the recovery of income tax. Saying that she had been a tax-resister long before the war, she continued:—

> It is to the British Constitution that the British Empire owes its place among the leading nations of the world, and it is the duty of her children, to whom her honour is dear, to keep her true to those principles. I am a Suffragist, I love my country, but I claim the right to give to my country in my own way what she has no right to take from me by force until women are represented in the councils of the nation. I ask that the judgment of bankruptcy against me be annulled.

The proceedings were adjourned for a fortnight; and Dr. Patch was entertained at luncheon by the Women's Freedom League, many suffragists being present to support her gallant stand for suffrage principles.

Items of Interest

The Commission of the French Chamber for Universal Suffrage has reported in favour of giving women the municipal vote and the right to be elected to municipal elections.

It is reported that the German League against the Emancipation of Women has petitioned the Reichstag for a law to ensure that where men and women are employed together no woman shall be placed in authority over men.

Lord Buckmaster has introduced a Bill in the House of Lords, to amend the Solicitors' Acts so as to enable qualified women to become members of the Law Society and practise as solicitors. It passed its second reading on February 28.

The Bishop of Willesden, speaking at a conference of laywomen in the Church of England, said it was clear that both in the State and the Church woman should have her true position given to her. She should certainly have the right of choosing those who represented her in Parliament.

Dr. Marion Phillips suggested at a recent conference of the Women's Labour League that the kitchens of the hotels commandeered by the Government would make admirable municipal kitchens.

The Home Secretary announced in the House of Commons on February 12 that licences were now to be issued to qualified women in London to enable them to become "drivers of public carriages."

Mr. Forster stated in the House recently that a few women carpenters have been sent out to France as an experimental measure.

Women justices sat in Court at Brisbane for the first time on February 12.

The Chairman of the London General Omnibus Company stated at the annual meeting the other day that more than 2,000 women were now engaged as conductors, 550 as cleaners of omnibuses, and others in various higher positions, as depôt cashiers, &c.

In shipyards and machine engineering shops women are employed in large numbers in helping to increase the output of merchant shipping and lifeboats.

At Willesden women are being employed as dustmen.

Lady Selborne wrote recently to the *Times* to suggest that the authorities should forbid the use of starched linen, on the ground that it involved great waste of rice.

NOTES ON THE CRIMINAL LAW AMENDMENT BILL

By Alison Neilans

The new Criminal Law Amendment Bill needs the most searching examination by all suffragists. It contains eleven clauses, nine of which are not objectionable (indeed, some are excellent), and two clauses which ought to be opposed with the whole force of the women's movement.

The Good Clauses

The Bill makes the protection of girls from acts of indecency absolute up to 16 years of age, and abolishes "reasonable cause to believe" as a defence. This is a real gain, and, in effect, is likely to be even more useful than merely raising the age to 18 and retaining the defence of "reasonable cause."

I imagine most suffragists would be glad to see some protection on these lines extended to boys also.

The law is tightened up in regard to landlords of premises used for habitual prostitution, and the penalties for brothel-keeping are increased. Quack advertisements in newspapers of "remedies" for venereal diseases and of abortifacients are prohibited, and some technical obstacles to a prosecution under the Incest Act are removed.

The Bad Clauses

Now we come to the bad clauses. I am of opinion that suffragists ought to oppose clauses 2 and 6 in their entirety for the reasons following:—

1. *As it stands Clause 2 does not make the communication of venereal disease a punishable offence, nor does it provide for dealing in any way with persons who infect other persons*:—Because
2. It would be practically impossible to prove that any ordinary person
   (a) was venereally diseased, and
   (b) that being diseased they had invited to, or actually had, sexual intercourse with another person.
3. The only person who could, in practice, be proved guilty of offences under Clause 2 are those persons committed to prison, or to compulsory detention, under the offences mentioned in the Schedule (page 7 of the Bill). These persons would in nearly all cases be women convicted of solicitation, and possibly a few men of the vagrant class.
   For all practical purposes the whole of Clause 2 would apply only to women.
4. Under Sub-sections 3 and 4 of Clause 2 a woman can be arrested for solicitation, or for mere loitering upon police evidence only and without any corroborative evidence whatsoever that she did actually solicit any person. She will then be liable to a forced medical examination, and, if found to be diseased, can, when next arrested for the same offence of solicitation, be sent to prison for two years. *This heavy sentence and surgical outrage can be inflicted without any evidence being given at any stage that any person was either infected, solicited, or molested by the woman charged.*

Under no circumstances ought the compulsory physical examination of women for veneral disease to be tolerated.

A Suggestion

Instead of Clause 2 I would suggest the substitution of the following clause:

"Any person who, knowingly, or by culpable negligence, communicates venereal disease to any other person shall be deemed to be guilty of causing grievous bodily harm, and shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or on summary conviction to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding six months."

Clause 6:— This clause should be opposed because, while increasing the penalties for solicitation on a second conviction, it perpetuates the present unjust and unequal laws against solicitation. These laws are hopelessly confused and indefinite. They deal

(a) With men who *persistently* solicit.
(b) With women alleged to be known to the police as prostitutes.

In actual practice the law against solicitation does not deal at all with men who solicit, nor does it apply to women who are not definitely alleged by the police to be known to the police as prostitutes. Hence women and girls have no protection against annoyance by men, and men have no protection against annoyance by women and girls unless they are "known prostitutes."

Confused Law Against Solicitation

The whole law against solicitation is in a hopelessly confused and indefinite condition and in practice is only applied to women. It should therefore be entirely swept away and for it should be substituted a law which prohibits molestation or annoyance in the streets by any person or persons, no conviction to follow except on the evidence of the person so molested or annoyed. It is only when solicitation amounts to molestation or annoyance that it should be treated as an offence. If it does not cause molestation or annoyance the person solicited has no cause of complaint.

If this is considered too drastic a change in the law to be passed in war time, at least let us demand that there shall be no increase of penalties imposed upon women convicted under the present unequal law.

With these amendments we could give the Bill our hearty approval, but in my view it would be better to lose the whole Bill than to carry it with any clauses which re-introduce the compulsory medical examination of women for venereal diseases, and which in addition enables a woman to be sent to prison for two years without any legal safeguards and without proper evidence.

T. O'Meara writes, with reference to the clause concerning the communication of venereal disease by one person to another:—

> It will *not* protect the wife and children of a man infected before his marriage; for, even if the woman chose to bring him into court on this charge alone—and how many women would do so?—nothing would be easier than for the man to assert that he *did* believe himself to be completely cured. Moreover, this might be perfectly true; he might even have a doctor's certificate to that effect; but nothing is more certain in the whole realm of medical knowledge than the extreme uncertainty of cure in these particular diseases. We know enough of the usual workings of our courts of law to estimate how often the word of a man brought before the bench on such a charge would be accepted, and how often the word of a woman—friendless and powerless, and already an outcast from social privileges—would be rejected. She would go to prison; another woman, not hitherto beyond hope, would promptly take her place and become infected in her turn; and, in short, "what we lost upon the swings we should make up on the roundabouts."
>
> I must frankly confess that I see no way out of this difficulty unless it be the way once pointed out by Stevenson: "Once you are married"—which, in this case, should be taken to mean the most distant contemplation of marriage—"there is nothing left for you, not even suicide, but to be good."

THE ADULT SUFFRAGE DEMONSTRATION

The great demonstration, organised by the National Council for Adult Suffrage, in the Kingsway Hall, on February 10, was impressive and successful. Every seat was sold, and numbers were turned away at the door. Many people of distinction in social, political, literary and industrial circles were on the platform; and the following resolution was passed without a dissentient voice:—

That this meeting welcomes the resolutions of the Speaker's Conference as a step on the way to a national franchise, but urges the Government in drafting their Bill to introduce a simple and generous measure of franchise reform on the adult suffrage basis, both for men and women.

THE SPEECHES

Excellent reports of the meeting appeared in the Press. We greatly regret that lack of space makes it impossible for us to reproduce the admirable speeches made—except that by Miss Mary Macarthur, which appears on page 245.

Councillor Margaret Ashton moved, and Mr. Percy Alden, M.P., seconded the resolution given above; and a second resolution was moved, seconded and supported by Miss Macarthur, Mrs. Barton and Mr. W. C. Anderson, M.P., respectively. (See page 245.)

Sir John Simon

Sir John Simon, M.P., made the principal political speech, dealing with the proposals of the Speaker's Conference. In the course of it he said:—

There were some members who felt obliged to take up that attitude [objection to votes for women], but the rest of the Conference were equally free; and when I tell you that, as regards the unanimous resolutions, we agreed if the Government brought them forward to support them as a whole, that stipulation does not exist as regards the proposals for woman suffrage. Therefore, as far as I am concerned and others on the Conference, I am perfectly free when the Bill is introduced to urge for other and better proposals. . . . . .

What I would urge is this, let us point out how very unsatisfactory this proposed compromise is, how it really does not proceed upon an intelligible number, and how the very arguments which justify and compel the admission to the franchise now are those which justify and compel the admission of a large mass of women rather than a smaller selection. Let us do all this. Let us show how our own resolution is a resolution to make the wishes of the community felt in orderly and constitutional and firm ways; but do not let us lose the chance of getting the principle of woman suffrage introduced by the Government into a Government Bill, and submitted to the House of Commons, where it would be liable to change in discussion, and therefore at least remove this utterly artificial, this hopelessly antiquated, distinction between men and women, as though, forsooth, to put a ballot paper into a ballot box was not a ladylike occupation. . . . . .

I would implore you here to see that we co-operate with all who wish this great change to be made, and co-operate in such a spirit as will secure at any rate that the Bill should be introduced, containing as generous a measure as the Government can be induced to insert.

The Bishop of Lincoln

An interesting letter was read by Mr. Henry W. Nevinson, from the Bishop of Lincoln. Regretting his inability to be present, owing to illness, the Bishop wrote:—

I am more than ever convinced that the resolution to be submitted to the meeting offers the only possible solution of the suffrage problem. Of course we are thankful that the Speaker's Conference so clearly recommends an instalment of women's suffrage, and I cannot doubt that Parliament will enact it. But the proposal at best is an unsatisfactory compromise. It betrays a fear of a numerical superiority of women on the Register. . . . But if there are more women citizens than men citizens, it is only reasonable that they should have a numerically larger vote. The checks and counter-checks suggested are purely arbitrary and must be swept away.

Mr. J. H. Garvin

Ill-health also prevented Mr. J. H. Garvin (the well-known Editor of the *Observer*) from being present. A communication from him, avowing his conversion to woman suffrage, was also read to the meeting, and made a deep impression. In the course of it these passages occurred:—

Those who have been good enough to do, in fact, the vital duties of citizenship in war are good enough to enjoy the equal rights of citizenship in peace. I am glad enough that access to the register is to be made easier for male adults, and that something like manhood suffrage is now inevitable; but that just reform, sweeping away petty restrictions on one sex, cannot for a moment compare in importance with the political and social necessity of redressing once for all the gigantic inequality which now debars women from the vote. . . . . .

In my personal view it would be well worth while to have something like the recommendations of the Speaker's Conference carried by consent rather than that an immense, and indeed an unprecedented, reform should be indefinitely postponed or vitally endangered; but I most strongly hope that there will be no attempt to seek compromise by the method of raising the age limit against women to a degree which would be both absurd and untenable.

WOMEN WORKERS AND VOTES

An important meeting was held by the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (supported by many other suffrage and women's organizations, including the United Suffragists) in the Queen's Hall on Tuesday evening, February 16. Mrs. Fawcett, in the Chair, spoke for all Suffragists when she said that men alone, in peace or in war, could not maintain the State. The Report of the Speaker's Conference made it impossible for the House of Commons to touch the subject of franchise without enfranchising women. The terms suggested were not those for which they stood, and fell short of the plain and simple equality they had always asked for; but the N.U.W.S.S., and other Suffragists also, urged the Government to introduce a Bill without delay, based on the lines of the Speaker's Conference, and containing as an integral part provisions for the enfranchisement of women.

Mr. Runciman, M.P., Mrs. Creighton, Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., Mrs. Dickinson, and Mrs. Strachey, were the other speakers at the meeting; and on the platform were many women representative of the various trades and occupations in which women are now employed.

LABOUR AND ELECTORAL REFORM

A National Conference, representative of the whole organized Labour movement, including the women's industrial organizations, has been convened by a Joint Committee of the Trade Union Congress, the National Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Labour Party. It will meet in the Central Hall, Westminster, on Tuesday, March 20, "to demand from the Government immediate legislation on the general lines of the Speaker's Conference Report on electoral reform, including the enfranchisement of women and redistribution of seats."

WOMEN'S LIBERAL FEDERATION

The Executive Committee of the Women's Liberal Federation have passed a resolution expressing satisfaction that the Speaker's Conference has recommended the passing of a Bill for electoral reform, and that it has decided by a majority that some measure of women's suffrage should be conferred. The committee further calls upon the Government to introduce a Bill at the earliest possible date which, while dealing with other aspects of electoral reform, will not fail to confer the Parliamentary franchise upon women.

CORRESPONDENCE

Medical Women and the Clinics

In the course of a communication (which we regret to be unable to publish in full) concerning the recommendation in the Local Government Board circular, that where possible a medical woman should be appointed to the women's clinics set up for the treatment of venereal disease, D. H. M. writes:—

Is it not imperative, therefore, that our women's Societies should make known their wishes to County Councils, Local authorities, etc.? . . . Unless women save the situation *now*, medical men will continue to receive appointments almost everywhere. In such clinics there will be no privacy for the female patient, for we find that all local practitioners will be welcomed, and the medical student is to be everywhere encouraged to attend. . . . The feeling is strong within us that all such cases should be in the hands of medical women. Even if a girl has in the ardour of war time, been led astray, she is not necessarily immodest or depraved. Every spark of womanly dignity and reticence should be conserved, and thus by reverently shielding her, we shall inculcate self reverence, so that she may *never* fall again. To make these girls material for students is almost to ensure their downfall. By robbing them of womanly reticence we rob them of their only safeguard. And the girl of coarser nature needs, we feel sure, the same respectful treatment to *teach* her self respect. . . . In conclusion, if we do not seize the present opportunity, the Antenatal Scheme (with all its horrible possibilities for experiment and research) will also be almost entirely in the hands of medical men.

Workmen's Compensation Act

In reference to the provision of this Act that incapacity must last a fortnight before a claim may be preferred against an employer, Miss Isabel Buxton writes:—

I come a good deal into contact with actual cases, and the Act impresses me as another instance of legislation by one sex only. . . . One case I may cite, which is, I suppose, typical of many. A man earning 32s. per week, with six children, had an accident to his eye and made a claim under the W.C.A. The family of eight were left penniless for a fortnight: then they received for several weeks 16s. a week. As the woman herself said to me—"It don't seem as though we'll ever come round again, things are so dear." Few are sufficiently affluent to stand such drainages, and, of course, the mother has to pay most for these "caresses of the law." I do not dare to think how much some of the women receive as compensation: their normal wage is so meagre that the pittance seems altogether absurd. Can nothing be done to remedy this state of things?

[*The Editor welcomes correspondence, but begs that letters may be as concise as possible, owing to lack of space consequent upon shortage of paper.*]

DO YOU WANT A VOTE?

Then Join the U.S.

It is not enough to believe in Woman Suffrage. It is not enough to applaud those who work for Woman Suffrage. Everyone who does either, or both of these things, should join a Suffrage Society and read a Suffrage paper. That is the minimum of service that any man or any woman can render to the Cause.

READ "VOTES FOR WOMAN."

(Send 2s. for a year's subscription, post free, to the Publishers, at 27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.)

JOIN THE UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

(Fill in the membership card below, and send it, with 1s. or more, to the Hon. Secretary, United Suffragists, 27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.)

WHAT THE U.S. HAVE DONE

The United Suffragists have never stopped working for the Suffrage since war broke out. In the darkest days of 1914-16, when to want a vote was called unpatriotic though the war was a war for freedom, the U.S. went on upholding the banner of women's freedom. When a Franchise situation was once more created in 1916 by the state of the Parliamentary Register, the U.S. drew attention to this, showed the necessity for a new constructive policy, and formulated a demand for Adult Suffrage, which alone would ensure the enfranchisement of soldiers, sailors, and women.

The U.S. is a live Suffrage Society. Men and women work together in its ranks for the enfranchisement of all women, and for the enfranchisement of those four million additional men who are now deprived of the vote owing to an obsolete electoral system.

Do not waste any time about it. Join the U.S.!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

OBJECT:

To secure a Government measure to remove existing electoral anomalies and give votes to all women and all men.

The minimum subscription is a shilling a year.

Members are relied upon to support the Society to the best of their ability.

Name (Mr., Mrs., Miss).....

(Please write clearly.)

Address .....

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This form, when filled in, should be sent with membership fee to the Hon. Secretary, United Suffragists, 27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.

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Subscriptions to the paper should be sent to The Publisher, VOTES FOR WOMEN, 27, Chancery Lane, W.C.

The terms are (while a monthly issue), post free, 2s annual subscription, 1s. for six months, inside the United Kingdom; 2s. ($\frac{1}{2}$dol.) and 1s. (25 cents) abroad, payable in advance.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

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MARCH, 1917.

WHAT PARLIAMENT CAN DO

After our February issue went to press the Report of the Speaker's Conference on Electoral Reform was issued as a White Paper. Readers of our paper are naturally most interested in those clauses of it that contain franchise proposals. As far as men are concerned, the recommendations amount to very little short of complete adult suffrage. For women a limited suffrage is proposed, which, it is believed, would give the Parliamentary vote to about six million women.

The Woman Suffrage Proposals

The following is the text of Section VIII., which relates to woman suffrage:—

The Conference decided by a majority that some measure of woman suffrage should be conferred. A majority of the Conference was also of opinion that if Parliament should decide to accept the principle, the most practical form would be to confer the vote in the terms of the following resolution:—

33. Any woman on the Local Government Register who has attained a specified age, and the wife of any man who is on that Register if she has attained that age, shall be entitled to be registered and to vote as a Parliamentary elector.

Various ages were discussed, of which 30 and 35 received most favour.

The Conference further resolved that if Parliament decides to enfranchise women, a woman of the specified age, who is a graduate of any University having parliamentary representation, shall be entitled to vote as a University elector.

The Report further recommends a revision of the Local Government register, which, if adopted, will lessen the period of qualification and remove some of the existing anomalies, but not by any means to the degree of simplification and enlargement proposed in the case of the Parliamentary register for men.

Sex Differentiation in the Basis

To those who, like the United Suffragists, sincerely hold the belief that no Parliament can truly represent the voice of the people unless it is elected by all the men and all the women of the country, these suffrage proposals obviously call for serious criticism. To begin with, it is clear that the fear of the numerical superiority of women has dominated the minds of the members of the Conference. Otherwise, a body of men genuinely anxious, as we know the Conference to have been, to arrive at a scheme that would simplify our present clumsy electoral law could scarcely have entertained the idea of maintaining a limited and complicated Local Government register, both for men and women, in order to be able to set up a limited and complicated Parliamentary register for women. The men's franchise is to be complicated, in fact, by the maintenance of two registers, for the sake of avoiding the preponderance of women voters that would be created if full womanhood and manhood suffrage were established for the purposes both of the Parliamentary and the Local Government franchise.

Sex Differentiation in Age

Our second criticism is, of course, directed against the recommendation of a different voting age for men and women. The objections to this proposal are so obvious, and have been so universally expressed since the publication of the Report, that reference need be made here only to the most serious of them all—that a higher voting age for women would exclude from the Parliamentary Register the majority of the women who have been widowed by the war, the majority of soldiers' and sailors' wives, and the majority of women war workers, on whose special behalf suffragists (with Reconstruction and the future welfare of all industrial workers in view) have urged the vital need for enfranchising women before the war is over.

If these two methods of differentiation as between men and women were inspired, as we suppose, by a fear of the numerical preponderance of women, we must record our regret that the Conference did not take women suffragists into its confidence and seek their help in drawing up a scheme that should enfranchise only a certain number of women, but in such a way as to ensure the representation of all classes and kinds of women. Such a scheme, we feel sure, might have been devised.

Gains as well as Losses

So far as these criticisms hold good, then, the woman suffrage recommendations of the Report are a disappointment. They are a departure from the old suffragist standpoint of "equal terms" for men and women. They fall considerably short of the ideal held by adult suffragists, such as those for whom this paper speaks.

At the same time, no adult suffragist who is honest can possibly deny that the woman suffrage recommendations, insufficient in many respects, mark an advance towards that ideal. If they are carried into law, the sex barrier will be removed, the stigma on woman, occasioned by her non-recognition as a citizen, will be swept away, and some six millions of women, the majority of whom will be wives and mothers of industrial workers (nearly all the 30,000 members of the Women's Co-operative Guild, for instance, would be enfranchised) will possess the full rights of citizenship. It would be most unjust if, in criticising the shortcomings of the Report, we neglected to record our satisfaction at what the woman's cause has gained by this recognition of the principle of woman suffrage.

What We Expect from Parliament

But, having granted so much, we also reserve the absolute right to demand an equally fair judgment from Parliament, which, up to the time of going to press, has not yet been given an opportunity to say what it thinks of the Report. It is, of course, admitted—no practical politician can possibly deny this—that no Bill providing for drastic franchise changes can have any hope of success, at a moment when we are engaged in a terrible world-war, unless it be an agreed Bill, a Bill that meets to some extent the views of all sections of opinion and outrages none. Until Parliament pronounces upon the Report we do not know if a Bill based upon its proposals would be an agreed Bill or not. The composition of the Speaker's Conference would certainly lead one to expect that the recommendations relating to the male electorate very fairly represent the balance of opinion in the House, because the members of the Conference were chosen with a view to reflecting that diversity of opinion in its actual proportions. But, we are told, the members of it were about evenly divided on the subject of woman suffrage; and that, we maintain, does not actually represent suffrage opinion in the House, where it is known that suffragists are in a considerable majority. So it is only fair to conclude that the House would be likely to take a more generous view of women's claims than the Conference has done, and that it certainly would not wish by an artificial age limit to exclude from the franchise those gallant younger women, whose services during the war have made them the subject of so much Parliamentary eloquence. If we are wrong in this conclusion, the House of Commons will have a chance of saying so when it debates the resolution that is to be moved on the Report, after this issue appears. If we are right, it is clear that the way to avoid controversy and, at the same time, to give the Government a lead in framing a Bill that can truly be passed by consent, will be for the House to record its opinion that on no account must the industrial women be left out of any franchise measure that is introduced into Parliament. And, since the next move is with the House of Commons, that is what we look to the House of Commons to do when the Speaker's Report is laid before it.

What is more, we look to the House of Commons to use the full power of its prerogative to insist that the Speaker's Report shall not be laid on the shelf and forgotten, but embodied in a Franchise Bill and introduced into Parliament without delay.

The Door That is Ajar

The air is full of rumours as these words are written—rumours of a general election, rumours that the Bill will be wrecked unless it provides for complete adult suffrage, rumours that it will be wrecked if it does provide for complete adult suffrage, rumours that there will be no Bill at all. Perhaps there may be some doctrinaires—not idealists, however, for idealists are the really practical people of this world—who take the academic view that if they cannot have all they will have nothing. Perhaps there may be some insincere politicians, who, under pretence of demanding all, hope to prevent anybody from having anything. But I think true adult suffragists—and all suffragists have become automatically adult suffragists now that, as VOTES FOR WOMEN prophesied months ago, the Registration problem has been tackled with a proposal of manhood suffrage—will rather concentrate on flinging as wide as possible the door that is at last ajar, the door that will make them free of the road that leads ultimately to the great goal of their desire.

Evelyn Sharp

DR. MARIE PETHICK

The loss to the Suffrage movement occasioned by the death of Dr. Marie Pethick will be felt not only by U.S. members, but by the large number of other Suffragists who knew her. Like so many of those who took part in the militant movement, she was naturally reserved, and her courage was of the most unobtrusive kind. Only her intense conviction of the urgent need for women's enfranchisement impelled her to give public expression to her faith, and she suffered a term of imprisonment for taking part in a deputation to the House of Commons, which was not received, and of which the members, refusing to disperse, were arrested on a technical charge of obstruction.

A characteristic incident in her career as a medical woman was her refusal of a post, long coveted by her, as Tuberculosis Officer, on the ground that the salary offered was £100 less than the recognised salary paid to men. It was one of the first of such posts offered to women, and she felt she owed it to women to make a stand for "equal pay for equal work."

Our readers will join with us in sending deep sympathy to Dr. Pethick's two sisters, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence and Miss Dorothy Pethick, who have been so long associated with us in our movement for women's freedom.

WOMEN WAGE-EARNERS MUST HAVE THE VOTE!

By Mary Macarthur.

(A Speech made at the Kingsway Hall, London, on February 10, 1917.)

It has already been amply demonstrated that during the last two and a half years many preconceived ideas have been changed, and there has been no more striking change than in the public attitude towards the question of the enfranchisement of women. The war has thrown a new fierce light upon the stage of the world, and many of the customs and institutions of modern Society have not been able to withstand its revealing glare. Women, however, have gained by the light which the war has thrown upon them; though I do not think that women have changed so much as that men's conception of women has changed.

The Vote is not a Reward

We have to welcome to our ranks many converts; luke-warm advocates of woman suffrage have become enthusiastic supporters, opponents of our cause have changed to adherents. But I want to say quite frankly that the reason given by many people for their change of mind—that women by their service to their country in its time of stress, have earned the vote as a reward—does not appeal to me. I am one of those who never doubted women's capacity for work or sacrifice. The claim of all women to the vote from the standpoint of merit was so strong before the war that I would hesitate to base new justification on the services which they have so willingly rendered during the war.

We hear much of the wonderful work that women have done on the munitions of war. I am the last person to disparage the work which women have done. I have the proud privilege of representing many thousands of these women, but it must be remembered also that women did wonderful work before the war. We are told that much of the work they are now doing is difficult, is dangerous, is dirty, but so was much of the work that they did before. There is a difference, however, and it is a difference which should give us all to think. The difference is that for some forms of that work women now receive a much higher rate of pay than they did before the war. Why? Nothing has impressed me more in my work as a Trade Union official during the past two years than the comparative ease with which earnings of £3, or even £4, a week can be secured for women where the standards of men are directly affected, and where men are alive to that fact. But on the other hand there is an almost insuperable difficulty in getting even £1 a week for other women doing equally difficult, equally dangerous, and equally necessary work, where men's interests are not so affected, or they are not alive to the fact.

Men's Votes and Men's Status

I am one of those who have always said that the industrial organisation of women was even more important than their political organisation, from the point of view of improving their economic position; but I am bound to say—since this is the time for recanting old faiths—I am bound to say I feel that even the better industrial organisation of the men is not sufficient to count entirely for the difference in their power. Though I have been slow to come to this conclusion, I must admit that their status as voters helps very materially to weigh down the scales.

The Munition Workers' Pay

Woman's need for political power, as apart from her right to it, is surely not a matter for controversy. Her need for it has never been more clearly demonstrated than in the long hard fight we have had with the Ministry of Munitions for a living wage for women workers. It is a fight which has not yet ended in victory.

I hold in my hand a letter from a Minister of State, in reply to a complaint that a woman of eighteen, who was working on munitions of war—and was bound to her employer by the leaving certificate clauses of the Munitions Act—was only paid 8s. 6d. per week. The reply from the Minister of State was that he had made representations that this was a low wage, and the firm had decided to increase her wage to 11s. It appears, he stated, that she started work with the firm on the 6th of April, 1915; and the advance now given in 1916—to 11s!—seemed to meet the requirements of the Fair Wages Clause! I think that that letter alone is sufficient justification of our claim for enfranchisement.

An Overwhelming Argument

For my part, the great new overwhelming argument for the inclusion of women, and the inclusion especially of the wage-earning women, is that which was so effectively used by Sir John Simon towards the close of his speech. It is that which appears to have weighed with the ablest of our past opponents. Mr. Asquith does not talk of conceding the women's claim as a reward of merit, but as a simple act of justice. These are his words:—

> . . . . When the process of industrial reconstruction has to be set on foot, have not the women a special claim to be heard on the many questions which will arise directly affecting their interests, and possibly meaning for them large displacements of labour? I cannot think that the House will deny that, and I say quite frankly that I cannot deny that claim.

It is undeniable that political measures will have to be discussed vitally affecting the future lives, not only of the million new women who are said to have come into industry, but of the millions who were there before—not only affecting the wage-earning women, but affecting the wage-earner's wife. The new world that must be built cannot be built without the aid and co-operation of women. It has been demonstrated in these recent days that women equally with men have a duty to the State. We have never shirked that duty; but rights and duties cannot be divorced, and the most elementary of our rights is the right to a voice in framing the laws of the State which claims our allegiance.

Women Excluded by the Report

I appreciate what has been done by our staunch and able friends in the Speaker's Conference, and I say—very gently perhaps, but I say it all the same!—the resolutions have been come to largely on the argument of the work that women have done. Yet these recommendations would exclude the vast majority of the women who have made munitions of war. I am not affected by that, but what I am affected by is that it would also exclude a great body of women whose conditions of life and labour are now in the melting pot.

Mr. Asquith and Adult Suffrage

I have quoted to you what Mr. Asquith said in August, 1916— that he could not deny the claims of women to be heard. I am going to quote from a statesman of equal eminence in June, 1914:—

> I have always said that if you are going to give the franchise to women, give it to them on the same terms as men. Make it a democratic measure. It is no good paltering with a thing of this kind. If the discrimination of sex is not sufficient to justify the giving of the vote to one sex and the withholding of it from another, it follows *a fortiori* that the discrimination of sex does not justify and cannot warrant giving women a restricted form of franchise when you give it to men in an unrestricted form. If the change has got to come, we must face it boldly, and give it on a thoroughly democratic basis.

That was said in June, 1914—by Mr. Asquith! If Mr. Asquith and those who think with him act on these two statements—one in June, 1914, and one in August, 1916—the resolution which I now move will take effect:—

"That this meeting, realising that the problem of reconstruction will vitally affect the lives of all wage-earning women—including the wives of wage-earners—and cannot be solved without their assistance, expresses the conviction that no franchise reform can be satisfactory which does not provide for their complete inclusion."

THE WOMAN'S JOB

HOUSEWIVES MAY REDUCE THE COST OF LIVING BY—
BAKING THEIR OWN BREAD
DOING THEIR OWN SEWING
TRIMMING THEIR OWN HATS
KNITTING STOCKINGS FOR THE FAMILY
SHOPPING IN PERSON
SIFTING THE ASHES

With acknowledgments to the "Women's Century" (Canada).

"Idle" Housewife: "Oh, thanks!"

UNITED SUFFRAGISTS

27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. Telephone, Holborn 5880

THE CAMPAIGN

Saturday, March 3; 3.30 p.m.—Drawing-room Meeting.—44, Platts Lane, Hampstead. Chair: Miss Winifred Holiday. Speaker: Miss Margaret Hodge.

Monday, March 5; 7.30 p.m.—Open Meeting.—Corporation Chambers, Bolton. Speaker: Mr. W. Addison on "Imagination in Art."

Tuesday, March 6; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club, 92, Borough Road, S.E. Speaker: Major H. J. Gillespie, D.S.O.

Wednesday, March 7; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—Central Halls, Bath Street, Glasgow. Debate between W.F.L. and Glasgow U.S. Speakers: Miss McLelland (W.F.L.) and Mrs. Crawfurd (U.S.). Chair: Mrs. Kelsall.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9; 8 P.M.—U.S. PUBLIC MEETING.—SMALL ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.—LADY EMILY LUTYENS ON "WOMEN'S TASK IN THE COMING CIVILISATION"; MR. H. W. NEVINSON ON "THE PRESENT CRISIS." ADMISSION FREE.

Tuesday, March 13; 8 p.m.—Annual Meeting.—Clarion Café, Lord Street, Liverpool.

Tuesday, March 13; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Miss Evelyn Sharp.

Sunday, March 18; 3 p.m.—P.S.A. Meeting.—Wesleyan Church, Ashford. Chair: Mr. Herbert Lee. Speaker: Mrs. Despard. Followed by Public Meeting in Council Schools at 6.30 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, and others.

Monday, March 19; 7.30 p.m.—Members' Business Meeting. Bolton U.S.

Tuesday, March 20; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Miss Underwood.

Tuesday, March 20; 8 p.m.—Members' Meeting.—13, Suffolk Street, Birmingham.

Tuesday, March 27; 8 p.m.—Open Meeting.—U.S. Women's Club. Speaker: Mrs. Ben Webster.

Tuesday, March 27; 8 p.m.—Public Meeting.—The Library, Prince Arthur Road, Hampstead. Speakers: Mrs. Pethick Lawrence and others.

FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 8 p.m.—U.S. PUBLIC MEETING. SMALL ESSEX HALL, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.—SPEAKERS: MISS ALISON NEILANS ON "PERILS OF THE STREETS"; MRS. AYRTON GOULD ON "THE SUFFRAGE SITUATION."—ADMISSION FREE.

Monday, April 2; 7.30 p.m.—Open Meeting.—Corporation Chambers, Bolton. Speaker: Mrs. Affleck on "The Re-Birth of Ireland."

U.S. LONDON MEETINGS

"Women as Comrades"

An illuminating address on the above subject was given by Mr. H. Baillie Weaver (Vice-President of the United Suffragists) at the meeting held by the U.S. in the Essex Hall on February 16. An interesting discussion followed, in which several members of the audience took part. Miss Evelyn Sharp also spoke, dealing with the woman suffrage proposals of the Speaker's Conference.

March Meetings—Important!

U.S. members are reminded of the two meetings in March, also in the Small Essex Hall, Strand (see Campaign, on this page), and urged to bring friends to them. It is of the highest importance during the present franchise crisis that no Suffrage meeting should be poorly attended. Handbills of these meetings are to be obtained from Miss Brewster at 27, Chancery Lane, W.C. Admission is free.

On March 9, at 8 p.m., Lady Emily Lutyens, appearing for the first time on our platform as a Vice-President of the U.S., will speak on "Women's Task in the coming Civilisation"; and Mr. Henry W. Nevinson will deal with the present crisis. On March 30, Mrs. Ayrton Gould will take the Chair, and Miss Alison Neilans (Association for Moral and Social Hygiene) will speak on "Perils of the Streets."

IN AID OF U.S. WOMEN'S CLUB

Friends of the U.S. Women's Club owe warm thanks to Miss Alice Mandeville, Mrs. Schütze, and others who kindly helped to organise the splendid concert given in Leighton House on February 13. A sum of £13 11s. 6d. was raised for the Club funds, and a delightful afternoon's entertainment was provided for those who were lucky enough to form the audience. Special thanks are due to the artists who so generously gave their services—Miss Marjorie Hayward, Miss Mandeville, Miss Irene Scharrer, Mr. Gervase Elwes, and Mr. F. B. Kiddle.

U.S. WOMEN'S CLUB

92, Borough Road, S.E.

Secretary: Miss V. Aitken. Tel.: Hop 4172

Our Christmas party on January 27 was a great success. Many thanks are due to the Misses Walford for the very excellent tea, which everyone enjoyed. There were 70 members and 80 children present. After tea we had an entertainment, the first part of the programme being given by an excellent conjurer, the second, by Mr. Threadgold. At 7 p.m., after all the children had been presented with a packet of sweets, the party broke up. We would like to thank all those who helped us, also those who have given us concerts this month:—Mr. Threadgold, Mrs. Whelen, and Miss Walford. Also for the following gifts: £2 13s., and cakes, jams, &c., for the party from the Misses Walford; tea-cloths from Miss Brown; 2s. for mending the gramophone from Miss Young.

Major H. J. Gillespie, D.S.O.

Club members are asked to make a point of coming to the meeting on Tuesday evening, March 6, when Major H. J. Gillespie, D.S.O., Hon. Treasurer of the United Suffragists, now on leave from France, has most kindly consented to speak.

ASHFORD U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Mr. John Marsh, 45, Royd's Road, Willsborough, Kent. Organizer: Miss Maude White, Magazine House, Winchelsea, Sussex

As Miss Sharp was unable to speak, owing to illness, to the P.S.A. meeting on January 8, she came down to speak instead on Sunday, February 25.

Members will be very pleased to hear that Mrs. Despard has consented to speak at an evening meeting, as well as at the P.S.A., on Sunday, March 18. Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck is taking the Chair. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Fitz Hugh, who has invited Mrs. Despard and Mrs. C. Bentinck to lunch, also to Mr. Herbert Lee, who has kindly promised to pay all travelling expenses.

Gratefully acknowledged.—Mr. Wind, 2s. 6d.; Miss Jellicoe, 1s.; Mrs. Knock, 1s.

BIRMINGHAM U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Julia Green, 13, Suffolk Street

A members' meeting will be held at the office on Tuesday, March 20, at 8 p.m., to make arrangements for the future. As this will be an important meeting it is hoped that all members who have a real interest in the work of the Birmingham branch will attend.

BOLTON U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss S. W. Holden, 110, Tottington Road, Harwood

On February 5, we had the pleasure of a visit from the Rev. J. Ivory Cripps, B.A., of Southport, who spoke on "Some Social, National and Racial Effects of the Great War." As might be expected, the subject gave rise to a stimulating discussion. Mrs. Affleck, of the W.I.L., presided, and gave a valuable contribution to the discussion from a mother's point of view. The meeting closed with votes of thanks to speaker and chairman. Subscriptions and donations gratefully acknowledged:—Mrs. P. H. Price, 2s.; Miss R. Donnelly, 2s.

GLASGOW U.S.

Hon. Sec. (pro tem.): Mrs. Macaulay, 44, Albert Drive, Crosshill

A most successful Whist Drive was held in Central Halls, Bath Street, on Friday, February 2, on which a profit of £4 17s. 2d. was made. During the interval for tea, short speeches were made by our President, Dr. Chalmers Smith, and our Treasurer, Mrs. Craig. Mrs. Agnes Dollan made a strong appeal for members, and five new members were enrolled. The paper also sold well.

Our next meeting in Central Halls, Bath Street, on March 7, will be a Debate on Suffrage with the Women's Freedom League. Speakers:—Mrs. Helen Crawfurd for the G.U.S. and Miss Lelland for the W.F.L. Chair:—Mrs. J. Kelsall (G.U.S.).

HAMPSTEAD AND GOLDER'S GREEN U.S.

Hon. Secretary: Miss Daisy Solomon, 64, Pattison Road, N.W.

Through the kindness of Mrs. Sadd Brown a successful meeting was held at 2, Chesterford Gardens, on Wednesday, January 31. Interesting speeches were made by Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett and Miss Neilans. The Collection amounted to £1 7s., and we made 2s. 5d. by the sale of literature. Members worked enthusiastically to make the Kingsway Hall Meeting known locally, and distributed 5,500 handbills. Fifty-eight tickets were sold and 25 bills were posted. Our next meeting will take place at 44, Platts Lane, on Saturday, March 3, at 3.30 p.m., when Mrs. Binnie will be the hostess. Miss Winifred Holiday will be in the Chair, and Miss Margaret Hodge has kindly promised to speak on "How Anti-Suffragists are made in our Nurseries." Will members please come and bring their friends? We are looking forward to hearing Mrs. Pethick Lawrence at a Public Meeting on March 27.

KENSINGTON U.S.

Hon. Sec., Miss Postlethwaite, 47a, Earl's Court Road, W. Telephone: 926 Western

In spite of the severe weather Lady Barclay and Miss Ward spent several days in distributing bills for the meeting in Kingsway Hall; Tickets also sold well in the shop. Grateful thanks are due to Mrs. Akenhausen for 1s. 6d. and to Miss Burke for 3s. 6d. towards the rent, and for 1s. given to the concert fund. Could any member spare an afternoon occasionally to take charge of the shop? As Miss Ward will be leaving shortly to take up other work, a little help in this way would be greatly appreciated.

LIVERPOOL U.S.

Hon. Sec.: Miss Isabel Buxton, 111, Queen's Road

The second Annual Meeting of the branch will be held at the Clarion Café, Lord Street, on Tuesday, March 13, at 8 p.m. Agenda:—Secretary's report and statement of accounts; Election of officers; Other business, of which notice is received not later than March 1.

An address will be given by Mrs. Williamson Forrester, of Manchester.

PORTSMOUTH U.S.

Hon. Sec: Miss L. H. Peacock, 4, Pelham Road, Southsea

A members' meeting was held on February 3, when an interesting report of the Annual Council Meeting was given by Mrs. Poole, the Portsmouth delegate. Several members promised their help in selling the paper outside suitable meetings, and the Secretary was asked to endeavour to get the paper placed in the reading rooms of the four public libraries in the Borough.

A Resolution was passed and sent to the Prime Minister, declaring the belief of the meeting that the country is ready for a simple franchise measure on an adult Suffrage basis for women and men, and expressing belief that this solution of the question is the one with which the Prime Minister himself is in accord.

With great regret the resignation of Miss N. O'Shea from the Hon. Secretaryship was accepted, her resignation being due to great press of work.

HENDON WOMEN'S FRANCHISE SOCIETY (Affiliated to United Suffragists)

Hon. Sec.: Mrs. McCabe, 49, Bridge Lane, Hendon, N.W.

Mrs. Lewis read a chapter of her forthcoming book at Dr. Vickery's At Home on February 2. Mrs. Lewis discussed various aspects of the modern home and paid a tribute to the Jewish home in which the mother and children are treated as being of supreme importance. An interesting discussion followed, but it would take many afternoons to thrash out even partially the many points raised.

The society sold 40 tickets for the demonstration on the 10th and many members were present. Three dozen "Votes" have been sold for February, but the Society wants to increase the local circulation. Dr. Vickery has very kindly promised to be At Home to members, their friends, and other enquirers on Friday, March 2nd, 2.30 p.m., at 47, Rotherwick Road.

THE FUND

	£	s.	d.
Mrs. C. W. Allen	0	2	6
Lady Barclay ...	0	5	0
The Misses Barrowman	0	5	0
Miss M. Brady ...	0	5	0
Miss Brewster ...	1	1	0
Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck	2	0	0
Chorley Wood Branch U.S.	5	0	0
Mr. Clayton	0	1	0
Miss D. Dawson	0	2	6
E. B. B.....	0	2	0
Miss H. Foster...	0	1	6
Mrs. Gandell.....	1	10	0
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory	1	1	0
The Misses Gulland	0	15	0
Miss Holden	0	10	0
Miss Anna Martin	1	0	0
Mr. Pethick Lawrence	25	0	0
Mr. R. Pott	2	3	0
Mrs. Richardson	1	0	0
Miss J. Reed.....	0	5	0
Miss Rorison.....	0	3	0
Mme. Sales	2	4	0
Miss Evelyn Sharp	1	1	0
Mr. Shaw	0	5	6
Miss M. Steede...	0	5	0
Sympathiser	0	1	0
Miss A. H. Tyrrell	0	2	6
Mrs. Baillie Weaver	2	0	0
Mr. J. Webster...	0	18	0
Mrs. Whelen.....	1	1	0
Miss W. Willcock	0	5	8
Miss R. Young ...	0	2	6
Total ...	50	18	8

COMPARISON OF PUNISHMENTS

LIGHT SENTENCES

Assault on Young Girl

The *Staffordshire and Worcestershire County Herald* (February 17) reports case of a grocer's manager, aged 38, indicted before Mr. Justice Horridge at Stafford Assizes with an attempt to commit a criminal assault on a young girl under 16. The Judge said the evidence was as clear as possible, but made allowance for the loss of character the man would suffer from conviction.

Sentence: *Six months' hard labour.*

Previous Conviction for Wife Beating

The *Evening News* (February 19) reports case of a man charged at Brentford with kicking his wife and breaking her arm. He had dissuaded her from going to a doctor; and when she finally went, it was too late to set her arm which was rendered useless for life. There was a previous conviction for breaking his wife's leg.

Sentence: *Two months' hard labour.*

HEAVY SENTENCES

Burning a Hay Stack

The *Times* (January 23) reports case of a tramp charged at the Somerset Assizes before Mr. Justice Bray with setting fire to a hay'rick. The Judge commented on the amount of animals' food thus destroyed and on the gravity of arson in war time.

Sentence: *Five years' penal servitude.*

Previous Conviction for Theft

The *Times* (February 8) reports case of a chauffeur charged at the Central Criminal Court before the Common Serjeant with forging and uttering a postal order for 8s. 6d. There was one previous conviction for shoplifting, for which he had been sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment.

Sentence: *Seven years' penal servitude.*

We scarcely know which of the two comparisons given above is the more glaring instance of the cheapness with which the woman's life and person is held in our law courts, by contrast with the importance given to the value of property.

The Cheapness of a Young Girl's Person

Our readers are asked to note that in the first case given—for which the maximum sentence would be two years' hard labour—Mr. Justice Horridge implied in his summing up that the case had been clearly proved against the prisoner. "It was rather shocking to him," continues the newspaper report, "that a man could go into the witness box and give the lie to the girl as the prisoner had done." So, apparently, perjury had been committed as well! Yet, full consideration was given, when sentence was pronounced, to the probability that "the prisoner would suffer heavily in the loss of character and the position which he had been apparently entitled to." We entirely fail to see why the fact that the man ought obviously to have known better should militate in his favour; or in what way "arson in war time," even to the point of destroying £100 worth of animals' food, is an offence ten times as serious (comparing the length of the respective sentences) as the offence of inflicting, or attempting to inflict, a terrible injury on a young girl.

A Wife Not Worth 8/6

The second comparison in our table of punishments is a remarkable instance of the emptiness of the argument sometimes put forward, that the greater severity of the sentences recorded in our right-hand column arises from the frequency of previous convictions also recorded there. (We entirely dissent from this view, even when the facts are as alleged.) In each of the two cases compared here, however, there was a previous conviction; so this argument, whatever its value, falls to the ground. Yet a man, who has previously broken his wife's leg, is given only two months' hard labour for breaking her arm and rendering it useless for life; while the man who has previously been guilty of shoplifting gets the monstrous sentence of seven years' penal servitude for forging the paltry sum of eight and sixpence! The thing would not be credible in a civilised country if we had not been so long accustomed to the savagery shown in our Courts towards offenders against the laws of property, and to the leniency shown towards offenders against the laws of humanity. Nor will this shameful disproportion be remedied until the barriers both of sex and class are swept away from our politcial and social system.

Incidentally it would be enlightening to calculate the exact value of a wife's arm, for the loss of which two months' imprisonment is considered sufficient, as compared with 8s. 6d., for the loss of which seven years' penal servitude is considered sufficient!

The Wife Beater—In America

In Kansas city, it appears (according to a cutting sent us from an American journal which is not named by our correspondent) they have recently initiated a new scheme for dealing with wife beaters. Judge J. H. Brady announced in the Police Court of that city that in future every man convicted of beating his wife would, in addition to the punishment inflicted have his portrait taken and posted in the City Hall lobby, together with his name and police record. It will be interesting to learn how far this method of publicity will act as a deterrent to the wife beater.

COMING EVENTS

A great Woman Suffrage demonstration, organized by the Manchester and District Joint Suffrage Societies, will be held in Albert Hall, Manchester, on Saturday, March 3, at 3 p.m. Chair: Mrs. Fawcett. Speakers: Sir John Simon, M.P., Mrs. Margaret Ashton, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Mrs. Despard, Mr. J. R. Clynes, M.P., Mr. T. Owen Jacobsen, M.P.

The Women's Freedom League are holding a Suffrage Rally at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Friday, March 2, 7 to 9.30 p.m.. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Mr. John Scurr, and others.

For United Suffragists' meetings, see Campaign, page 246.

ANOTHER CONVERT

Speaking recently at the annual meeting of the Harrogate Infirmary, Lord Faber said:—"Some years ago I was associated with the late Lord Cromer in opposing the grant of votes to women. I was wrong. I have changed my mind entirely since the war began, and now I shall do all I can to get women the vote."

TWO SCOTTISH M.P.'S

An M.P., described by the *Glasgow Herald* as a Scottish Liberal Member of Parliament, writes in that journal, apropos of the scheme of electoral reform outlined in the Speaker's Conference Report—"Its Scylla is woman suffrage and its Charybdis, Ireland; but with skilful Parliamentary navigation even these perils may be avoided."

Mr. Murray Macdonald, M.P., in answer to an enquiry addressed to him, replies as follows:—"I certainly would not support any franchise bill that did not provide for some extension of the franchise to women; nor do I think that any bill that did not provide for this would have the slightest chance of passing through Parliament."

AN OXFORD MEMORIAL

An important letter, signed by 37 Oxford men and women, appeared in the Press on February 17. Its purport was to point out the grave objections to enlarging the male electorate, as proposed in the Speaker's Conference Report, without at the same time enfranchising women, and the signatories therefore welcomed the acceptance of the principle of woman suffrage and made a strong appeal to the Government and to Parliament to give effect to this "in such form as may command the greatest measure of assent, as part of any scheme of electoral reform which may be introduced, rather than leave the question to be raised at a later time amid the passions of party controversy."

The signatories included Canon Scott Holland, Miss Jex-Blake, Professor Gilbert Murray, Lady Mary Murray and the Bishop of Oxford.

PUBLIC OPINION

On the Woman Suffrage Proposals of the Report of the Speaker's Conference on Electoral Reform

The Times

For our own part, as we have said before, we have always regarded Woman Suffrage as one of the changes which are inherent in the circumstances of the war, though these circumstances are far too seldom understood or expressed. Nothing, for instance, could be more insulting to the patriotism of women than the suggestion, which is often put forward, that the vote is a fitting "reward" for war-time work. Good work is its own reward. The real case for their enfranchisement in these days rests on the palpable injustice of leaving the women, who have become for the first time an essential factor in the national effort, to fight their industrial battles hereafter without such help as the vote provides. We doubt very much whether there is any great hostility left in this country to the principle of Woman Suffrage. Its advocates are almost forcing an open door. The practical problem is to devise a form of franchise which will as far as possible meet with general consent.

Daily Telegraph

It is not to be expected that this way of leaving the question will satisfy those zealous Suffragists who claim equality of treatment in every respect with men, and it is much to be hoped that the caution with which this explosive problem has been handled by the Conference may be imitated on all sides until the matter comes before Parliament, as it will do in a shape which holds out a much better chance of success for the Women Suffragists than any yet presented to the House of Commons.

Daily News

It is an immense fact that the claim of women to citizenship is admitted. It is only admitted, it is true, when resistance to it would be a grotesque impertinence. But it is admitted with so grudging a hand and on such false lines as to be gravely inadequate. . . . It may be, as Sir John Simon said, that we shall have to be content with an instalment on account now, for time presses, and we must have an electoral machine made by general consent. But the ideal of adult suffrage is the only practical path to a final settlement, and the Speaker's Conference has at least chained up the two great lions in that path.

Daily Chronicle

There remains the unsettled matter of the women's suffrage. It must be arranged, or the rest will be shipwrecked. The Conference could not arrange it, because certain of its members were against women's suffrage on any conditions. They are fully entitled to their view; but we do not believe that, after the demonstration of women's patriotism and women's capacity which the war has afforded, it will be shared by a majority in either House of Parliament.

Manchester Guardian

Much will depend on the disposition of the Government which is responsible for the drafting as a bill. They can hardly adopt a more restricted measure of enfranchisement than that agreed to by the majority, but they might well adopt a somewhat more generous one, and the House of Commons might go farther in the same direction.

Sheffield Daily Telegraph

No doubt a considerable and an important section of the community will be disappointed that the recommendations in regard to women's suffrage are not definite and thorough.

The Nation

Every effort ought to be made now, before a Bill is drafted, both by women and by Parliamentarians, to move the Cabinet to frame its Bill on wide lines. To exclude all women under thirty-five is, first, to exclude nearly all the munition workers; and secondly, to disarm most of those who have a direct concern in the future industrial settlement. No less than 75 per cent. of the women in paid occupations are under thirty-five years of age.

Christian Commonwealth

Women bear the full burden of citizenship, are just as patriotic as men, are equally ready to make sacrifices for the State, are not mentally inferior to men, and are certainly more likely to take a moralistic view of politics; and we stand by the demand for a simple and generous franchise measure embodying the principle of adult suffrage with no sex discriminations.

The Herald

Until and unless this is settled no scheme is democratic or decent; and the majority recommendation of the Speaker's Conference in favour of the extension of the vote, in some form or other, to women is a signal triumph for the democracy. At the same time the particular form adumbrated is anomalous and absurd.

Labour Leader

This is a proposal which cannot be seriously considered by Parliament. At this moment the Government is advertising for 30,000 women for dangerous war work, and the limits of age are 18 to 40. The House of Commons cannot have the effrontery to say that the women may be conscribed for industrial purposes at 18, but are not to be allowed to vote till they are 35 years of age.

The Clarion

Now that it is officially admitted that every fit woman is wanted to fight for victory, as well as every fit man, what is all this nonsense about only giving votes to women of 30 or 35? We all know that, having heavier responsibilities, women "grow up" much sooner than men, and if there is to be a difference in age, the boot should be on the other foot. But why any difference?

The New Age

When common sense is gone, reasoning is a poor reed for practical statesmen to lean upon. Thus we are in this position that while we know, and everybody who employs his common sense knows, that the enfranchisement of women, implying their identity with men, is a profound mistake, being based, as it is, upon a lie against nature, we are, nevertheless, left with no other defences for ourselves than reasonings that of necessity must appear inadequate to our faith.

Westminster Gazette

We can imagine irreconcilables arguing that this is another slight upon womanhood and rejecting the proposal with scorn. We hope before rushing to this conclusion they will ask themselves whether they can reasonably expect that we should at one leap pass from having no women enfranchised to placing a majority of women on the Register; whether, if some means must be found of mitigating this result, any better means can be found than the Conference proposes. It would be a thousand pities if this scheme and the prospect of getting with it a substantial beginning of woman franchise were wrecked by an irreconcilable demand for "all or nothing."

Daily Sketch

On the broader question of votes for women there is hardly any opposition to be found to-day. Women have worked so splendidly in the war that it is only a poor return to give them the common rights of citizenship. Our sense of justice now makes it imperative that we should give women a voice in national affairs. Logically, there was never any reason beyond man's selfishness and stupidity for holding back the voting right from women.

UNITED SUFFRAGISTS' MARCH MEETINGS.

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Friday, March 9, at 8 p.m.

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LADY EMILY LUTYENS on "Women's Task in the Coming Civilization."

Friday, March 30, 8 p.m.

Chair: MRS. AYRTON GOULD on "The Suffrage Situation."

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SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

AT THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FRANCHISE CLUB, 9, Grafton Street, Piccadilly, W., the following lectures will be given:—Wednesday, March 7, 7.15 p.m., House Dinner (for diners only), "The Ideal Home," Mr. T. Gregory; Chairman: Mr. Goldfinch Bate. Wednesday, March 14, 8 p.m., "Imperialism," The Honble. Sir John Cockburn, K.C.M.G.; Chairman: Mrs. Gilbert Samuel. Wednesday, March 21, 8 p.m., "The Food Question," The Honble. Lady Mackworth; Chairman: Sir William Chance, Bt. Wednesday, March 28, 8 p.m., "Motherhood." C. Gasquoine Hartley (Mrs. A. D. Lewis); Chairman: Mr. Cecil Chapman, J.P.

THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE hold meetings every Wednesday afternoon at 3 p.m. at the Caxton Hall, Westminster. March 7th, The Rev. C. Warlow on "Women and the Church," and Mrs. Mustard; Chair: Miss Eva Christy. March 14th, Mrs. Herring on "The Venereal Problem in Australia," and Mrs. Despard; Chair: Mrs. Corner. March 21st, Miss Margaret Hodge on "The Heroines of Shakespeare and Sheridan as Prototypes of Women of To-day," and Mrs. Mustard. March 28th, Mrs. Kineton Parkes on "Women in Political Warfare," and Mrs. Despard.

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